awakening & deliverance

(60) How is one to know if one is progressing?

Shri Maharaj persistently asks visitors to ask questions. He wants visitors to ask questions. He keeps telling ~~them~~, especially the overseas visitors, that they have spent considerable money and taken quite a lot of trouble to come to India to visit him and almost implores them to not to waste their time by not asking questions. If you really have no questions, he says, it means that there has been true and clear apperception, in which case why waste your time any longer: why don't you go home?! On the other hand, if there is some area which is not too clear, the clarification should be obtained right then and there. BUT, he warns, do not ask questions as a human being centred in a phenomenal object: "remember, I am not talking to individual entities, but as consciousness to consciousness about consciousness."

One of the visitors who had been visiting Shri Maharaj for quite some time began quietly: Perhaps I am speaking from a body-mind identity, but there is a question, a problem, which has been troubling me for so long that I cannot keep it bottled up any longer. I have talked about it to several other seekers here ~~but~~ and I know that they too have the same problem. I am not ~~I~~ now speaking for them but for myself. The problem is: how am I to know if there is any progress in any spiritual search? Occasionally, particularly during meditation, I do have a glimpse of what I am searching for but only a glimpse and only on occasions. How am I to know if I am progressing?

Shri Maharaj could understand the sincerity and earnestness with which the visitor asked the question, but, inspite of his sympathy for the questioner, he could not conceal the utter frustration he clearly felt. He sat still for some time perhaps to get over the combined effect of an overwhelming ~~of~~ fast of the physical weakness he had been ~~was~~ feeling

experiencing for several days and the mental anguish at the question. He began speaking slowly, more in sorrow than in anger: I think I shall stop talking altogether and put up a notice to that effect. I find that you people come here as a matter of habit or as a new experience which your friends have recommended. You don't really LISTEN. If you did, such a question could not have arisen. If such a question did raise its head, it could have been dealt with summarily if you had really listened to me and understood what I have been saying. Instead, I find that the question has gradually attained a strength which disturbs several of the visitors. The problem apparently is about progress. Who is to make the progress, and progress towards what? I have said this often enough and loudly enough ~~almost~~ to have almost lost ~~of~~ my voice: you are the conscious presence, the animating consciousness which gives sentience to the phenomenal object - you are not the phenomenal object which is merely an appearance in the consciousness of those who perceive it. How can an "appearance" make any progress towards any objective? Now, instead of letting this basic apperception instantaneously impregnate your very being, what you do is to accept it merely as a pretty thesis and ask a conceptual question: how can a conceptual appearance know that it is making conceptual progress towards its conceptual liberation?!

Shri. Maharaj quite often holds up an object like the gas lighter or a box which is nearby and asks: Is this you? Of course not. Does it need time to understand this? Apperception of this fact is immediate is it not? Why then should it take time to ~~understand~~ appreciate that you are not the phenomenal object but the universal consciousness that gives sentience to the phenomenal object? Please understand, says Shri. Maharaj, the apperception of this is prior to the arrival of consciousness which is the basis of intellect. A clear apperception is

therefore not a matter of gradual practice. Apperception can only happen by itself instantaneously; there are no stages in which progress is made.

Perhaps one wonders, could it be that the surest sign of "progress" – if one cannot give up the concept – is a total lack of concern about "progress" and an utter absence of anxiety about anyone's "liberation"?